

# STATE OF KANSAS

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## GOVERNOR LAURA KELLY

September 2, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C., 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C., 20510

The Honorable Bernard Sanders  
Chairman  
U.S. Senate Committee on the Budget  
Washington, D.C., 20510

The Honorable John Yarmuth  
Chairman  
U.S. House Committee on the Budget  
Washington, D.C., 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Chairman Sanders, and Chairman Yarmuth,

I urge the United State Congress to pass H.R. 4595, the *Medicaid Saves Lives Act* or to include similar provisions in the pending budget and reconciliation process. This legislation would provide affordable, accessible health care to approximately 165,000 Kansans.

By creating a federal look-alike program, the *Medicaid Saves Lives Act* will allow eligible residents of non-expansion states like Kansas to access full Medicaid coverage at no additional cost to states or the federal government. Further, this legislation will increase federal medical assistance percentages by ten percent for states that expand Medicaid, providing states like Kansas ten years to access full funding if they choose to expand Medicaid at the state level.

The impact of this legislation on Kansas cannot be overstated. Passing the *Medicaid Saves Lives Act* would allow Kansas to finally take advantage of expansion's many health benefits by:

- Providing affordable health care to 165,000 Kansans who currently fall into a health coverage gap, including 7,400 veterans and their spouses.<sup>1</sup>
- Supporting our rural hospitals and communities. Recent reports estimate that currently 72% of our state's total hospitals are at immediate risk of financial closure, largely because the Republican-controlled state legislature has not expanded Medicaid.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.expandkancare.com/why-expansion-matters/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://expandkancare.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Rural-Health-Policy-Brief\\_Final2.pdf](https://expandkancare.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Rural-Health-Policy-Brief_Final2.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/finance/state-by-state-breakdown-of-897-hospitals-at-risk-of-closing.html>

- Enhancing services for mental health and substance use disorders.

Additionally, expanding Medicaid will lead to a healthier workforce and economy. Medicaid expansion is predicted to create nearly 23,000 new jobs, produce \$17 billion in economic output through 2025, raise personal income by \$6.3 billion, and save private-sector employers up to \$80.6 million in Kansas.<sup>4</sup> Our economy cannot afford to miss this opportunity.

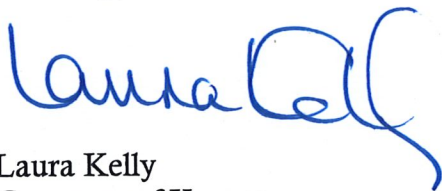
For the better part of a decade, our efforts to pass this commonsense legislation, despite its widespread popularity and tangible economic benefits, have been blocked by Republican leaders prioritizing their future political ambitions over the health of their constituents. During this time, we've forfeited nearly \$5 billion in federal funds – money that should have been coming back to Kansas families and into our economy – because of political gamesmanship.

Medicaid expansion is now a matter of life and death for Kansans. Our failure to expand previously left our communities and rural hospitals more vulnerable to the COVID pandemic, and further inaction would exacerbate our risk for future public health crises.

We cannot let partisan ideology prevent a single additional Kansan from accessing life-saving health care without being forced into bankruptcy. Passing the *Medicaid Saves Lives Act* is an opportunity to support Kansas, and the eleven other non-expansion states, as we work towards a healthier, stronger nation.

The *Medicaid Saves Lives Act* is the chance Kansans have been waiting for. It's the right thing to do to support our people, our communities, and our economy. For these reasons I respectfully implore Congress to enact the provisions of this legislation independently, or as part of larger legislation this year.

Sincerely,



Laura Kelly  
Governor of Kansas

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2021/may/economic-employment-effects-medicaid-expansion-under-arp>; <https://www.khi.org/assets/uploads/news/15169/42200trfinal.pdf>